



Biden aims for momentum as U.S. returns to climate fight

By E. KNICKMEYER/C. LARSON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is convening a coalition of the willing, the unwilling, the desperate-for-help and the avid-for-money for a global summit Thursday aimed at rallying the world's worst polluters to move faster against climate change.

The president's first task: Convincing the world that the politically fractured United States isn't just willing when it comes to Biden's new ambitious emissions-cutting pledges, but also able.

Success for Biden in the virtual summit of 40 leaders will be making his expected promises — cutting coal and petroleum emissions at home and financing climate efforts abroad — believable enough to persuade other powers to make big changes of their own.



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In this Feb. 1, 2021 file photo, emissions from a coal-fired power plant are silhouetted against the setting sun in Independence, Mo.

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Biden aims for momentum as U.S. returns to climate fight

Continued from Front

For small countries already fighting for their survival, global climate progress noticeably slowed in the four years of President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the effort. Panama Foreign Minister Erika Mouynes hopes the United States' high-profile return to international climate work will spur months of one-on-one worldwide deal-making leading up to November. That's when there will be United Nations talks in Glasgow, where about 200 governments will be asked to spell out what each is willing to do to keep the Earth from becoming a far hotter, more dangerous and less hospitable place. With Biden's summit, "we



In this Jan. 27, 2021 file photo, President Joe Biden signs an executive order on climate change, in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

can start with that momentum," Mouynes said. In Panama, freshwater shortages that officials blame on climate change already are complicating shipping through the Panama Canal, one of the world's

main trade routes and the country's main money earner. Even Panama's best climate safeguards, like hotlines and surveillance drones to catch rainforest logging, aren't enough to save the coun-

try on their own, Mouynes says. "Otherwise it's just empty speeches one after the other, where we all say we want a green country, a green planet, and nothing happens," she said.

The summit will see Biden, who campaigned on promises for a high-employment, climate-saving technological transformation of the U.S. economy, pledge to halve the amount of coal and petroleum pollution the U.S. is pumping out by 2030, officials said this week. That's compared to levels in 2005, and nearly double the voluntary target the U.S. set at the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord. The European Parliament confirmed Wednesday that it will set a similarly ambitious target. The U.S. is looking to other allies, such as Japan and Canada, to announce their own intensified climate efforts, hoping that will spur China and others to slow building of coal-fired power plants and otherwise chill their smokestacks.

And the world is looking to well-off countries to make clear how they'll help poorer countries shutter coal plants and retool energy grids, including \$2 billion that the U.S. already promised but has never paid.

"The summit is not necessarily about everyone else bringing something new to the table — it's really about the U.S. bringing their target to the world," said Joanna Lewis, an expert in China energy and environment at Georgetown University. This is an urgent but hardly perfect time for the U.S. to try to spur action for multiple reasons, and the summit will play out as a climate telethon-style livestream because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The world's top two climate

offenders, China and the United States, are feuding over nonclimate issues. Chinese President Xi Jinping waited until Wednesday to confirm he would even take part.

India, the world's third-biggest emitter of fossil fuel fumes, is pressing the United States and other wealthier nations to come through on billions of dollars they've promised to help poorer nations build alternatives to coal plants and energy-sucking power grids.

"Where is this money? There is no money in sight," Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said ahead of the summit this month, after Biden climate envoy John Kerry visited.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose nation by some assessments is the world's fourth-worst climate polluter, also accepted the U.S. invitation but is fuming over Biden calling him a "killer," as part of high tensions over Putin's aggressiveness abroad and U.S. sanctions. And at home, political divisions exposed by Trump's presidency have left the United States weaker than it was at the 2015 Paris global accord. Unable to guarantee that a different president in 2024 won't undo Biden's climate work, the Biden administration has argued that market forces — with a boost to get started — will soon make cleaner fuels and energy efficiency too cheap and consumer-friendly to trash. "The president has every intention of getting reelected, and certainly, ensuring that he is implementing policies where ... addressing our climate crisis, putting Americans back to work, go hand in hand," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday. □



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Garland announces sweeping police probe after Floyd verdict

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and AMY FORLITI

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is opening a sweeping investigation into policing practices in Minneapolis after a former officer was convicted in the killing of George Floyd there, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced Wednesday.

The decision comes a day after former officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of murder and manslaughter in Floyd's death last May, setting off a wave of relief across the country. The death prompted months of mass protests against policing and the treatment of Black people in the U.S.

The Justice Department was already investigating whether Chauvin and the other officers involved in Floyd's death violated his civil rights.

"Yesterday's verdict in the state criminal trial does not address potentially systemic policing issues in Minneapolis," Garland said.

The new investigation is known as a "pattern or practice" — examining whether there is a pattern or practice of unconstitutional or unlawful policing — and will be a more sweeping probe of the entire police department and may result in major changes to policing there.



Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks about a jury's verdict in the case against former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd, at the Department of Justice, Wednesday, April 21, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

It will examine the use of force by police officers, including force used during protests, and whether the department engages in discriminatory practices. It will also look into the department's handling of misconduct allegations and its treatment of people with behavioral health issues and will assess the department's current systems of accountability, Garland said.

A senior Justice Department official said prosecutors chose to announce

the probe a day after the verdict because they did not want to do anything to interfere with Chauvin's trial. The official would not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Three other ex-Minneapolis police officers charged in Floyd's death will be tried together beginning Aug. 23. The official said their trial is far enough off that officials believed it was still appropriate to make the announcement Wednesday, even though they are

still awaiting trial on state charges.

It's unclear whether the years under investigation will begin when Floyd died or before. Garland said a public report would be issued, if the department finds a pattern or practice of unconstitutional policing. The department could also bring a lawsuit against the police department, which in the past have typically ended in settlement agreements or consent decrees to force changes.

The Minneapolis Police

Department is also being investigated by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, which is looking into the department's policies and practices over the last decade to see if it engaged in systemic discriminatory practices.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said city officials "welcome the investigation as an opportunity to continue working toward deep change and accountability in the Minneapolis Police Department." The city council also issued a statement supporting the investigation, saying its work had been constrained by local laws and that it welcomes "new tools to pursue transformational, structural changes to how the City provides for public safety." The Justice Department official said attorneys from the department's civil rights division are on the ground in Minneapolis, working with the U.S. attorney's office and have been speaking with community groups and others.

Floyd, 46, was arrested on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill for a pack of cigarettes at a corner market. He panicked, pleaded that he was claustrophobic and struggled with police when they tried to put him in a squad car. They put him on the ground instead. □

U.S. takes new aim at ransomware after most costly year

By ERIC TUCKER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is taking new aim at ransomware after a year that officials say was the most costly on record for the crippling cyberattacks.

Formation of a task force of FBI agents and Justice Department prosecutors is an acknowledgment of the growing threat posed by ransomware attacks, in which hackers lock up computer data and demand ransom payments in order to give it back. The force is part of a broader government effort to combat cyberattacks that target vital infrastructure, in-

cluding a 100-day Biden administration initiative to bolster the digital security of electricity in the nation. Ransomware attacks have impeded hospital operations, led to the temporary closure of school classes and caused other chaos. Last year was the worst to date in terms of the economic toll, with ransom demands to victims averaging over \$100,000 and in some cases totaling tens of millions of dollars, according to the Justice Department. "Ransomware can have devastating human and financial consequences," Acting Deputy Attorney General John Carlin wrote

in a staff memo dated Tuesday and provided Wednesday by the Justice Department. "When criminals target critical infrastructure such as hospitals, utilities, and municipal networks, their activity jeopardizes the safety and health of Americans."

The Justice Department has brought indictments related to ransomware attacks, including a 2018 case against two Iranian nationals whose many victims included the cities of Atlanta and Newark, New Jersey and resulted in losses of \$30 million. But the threat has grown more sophisticated. As it imposed sanc-



In this March 22, 2019 file photo, an American flag flies outside the Department of Justice in Washington.

Associated Press

tions on Russia last week for election interference and the hacking of federal agencies, the Treasury Department said Russian

intelligence had enabled ransomware attacks by cultivating and co-opting criminal hackers and giving them safe harbor. □

Records: Superintendent lied to jury investigating massacre

By **TERRY SPENCER**

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)

— The superintendent of the Florida school district where 17 students and staff died in a 2018 high school massacre was arrested Wednesday after investigators said he lied to a grand jury investigating events surrounding the shooting.

Broward County Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie was arrested by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement at district headquarters and charged with perjury in an official proceeding, which is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

According to an indictment issued by the grand jury last week and released after Runcie's arrest, the superintendent lied when he testified before the panel three weeks ago, but it gave no specifics about the alleged falsehood. The jury is investigating whether districts are following school safety laws, including those implemented after the Feb. 14, 2018, slayings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in Parkland. The grand jury, which was empaneled two years ago, is also investigating whether:

— Public agencies are using state safety grants for other purposes.

— Broward school officials misappropriated millions of dollars from a bond measure aimed at improving campus safety. It was ap-



In this March 5, 2019 photo, Broward County Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie waits for the start of a meeting of the Broward County School Board in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Associated Press

proved by county voters almost four years before the shooting.

— Officials intentionally underreported on-campus crimes committed by students. Since the shooting, Runcie and district administrators have been accused by critics of lying about school crime rates and discipline problems.

To prove perjury, prosecutors must show Runcie knew his statements to the grand jury were false and not just a mistake.

Jail records do not show if Runcie, 59, has an attorney and he did not immediately respond to a message left Wednesday with a family member. He was released

on his own recognizance. He has been superintendent for 10 years.

Rosalind Osgood, chair of the Broward County school board, issued a statement Wednesday saying the district "will provide transparency, accountability and integrity as we continue to focus on delivering the highest quality educational experience for our students, teachers and staff." The statement did not say whether Runcie has been suspended and the district's media relations office did not immediately know the answer to that question. Broward County is the nation's sixth-largest school district with more than

270,000 students.

Tony Montalto, president of the group that represents Stoneman Douglas victims' families, said Wednesday he is "thankful" that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis ordered the grand jury investigation into Runcie and the district. "It is important that we get the facts about what happened and then hold those responsible accountable and implement positive change," said Montalto, whose 14-year-old daughter Gina died in the shooting. Also arrested Wednesday was Barbara Myrick, the school district's attorney. Myrick, 72, is accused of unlawfully disclosing grand jury proceedings, a

felony. Her indictment also did not disclose details. It could not be immediately determined if she has an attorney. One Broward administrator was previously arrested for allegedly rigging contracts with vendors and accepting bribes. He has plead not guilty.

Runcie and Scott Israel, then the county sheriff, both became the public face for Broward County's response to the shooting, both in mourning and then in criticism for their handling of the aftermath.

DeSantis removed Israel from office days after his inauguration in January 2019 under his authority to discipline elected local officials, but said he could not touch Runcie because he was appointed by the Broward County school board. Runcie's supporters have praised him for increasing the district's graduation rate, improving schools districtwide and reaching out to minority communities. He came into the national spotlight after the massacre when some parents criticized him for programs they felt had been lenient toward the shooter.

Runcie, by a 6-3 vote, survived a March 2019 motion before the school board that sought to have him removed. The attempt was led by member Lori Alhadeff, who was elected after her 14-year-old daughter, Alyssa, was killed in the shooting. □

NYC judge agrees to dismiss thousands of prostitution cases

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York judge agreed Wednesday to dismiss thousands of prostitution-related offenses dating to the 1970s at the request of the Manhattan district attorney, who also said he would no longer prosecute many offenses related to sex work.

The mass dismissal of charges is the latest big step in a movement to decriminalize sex work, or at least aim prosecutions at human trafficking or exploitation, rather than at mostly poor women who have historically made up the bulk of people arrested.

The cases also include charges related to loitering for the purpose

of engaging in prostitution. Earlier this year, the state Legislature repealed a 1970s anti-loitering law that opponents decried as a "walking while trans" ban.

State court Judge Charlotte Davidson dismissed the cases after District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., a Democrat, told the court in a video hearing that he wanted the cases dropped because the accused were "unfairly targeted" for prosecution.

"By vacating warrants, dismissing cases and erasing convictions for these charges, we are completing a paradigm shift in our approach," Vance said in a state-

ment after the decision. "These cases ... are both a relic of a different New York, and a very real burden for the person who carries the conviction or bench warrant." Vance's office said it had identified about 6,000 cases in its records dating to 1976 where there were convictions or open warrants with top charges of misdemeanor prostitution or unlicensed massage.

In February, New York repealed a 1976 law that allowed police to arrest people who appeared to be using a public space for prostitution. Police could make that judgment based on someone's

dress or appearance. Lawmakers pointed to police reports that cited "wearing a skirt" as grounds to make an arrest.

Eight people — including five transgender woman of color — filed a 2016 lawsuit challenging the old law as discriminatory, saying it had led to arbitrary arrests of transgender people in particular. The plaintiffs said people were still being detained "simply because an officer takes issue with her clothing or appearance."

Since then, local district attorneys had started to voluntarily stopped enforcing the law. □

Putin warns of 'quick and tough' Russian response for foes

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday sternly warned the West against encroaching further on Russia's security interests, saying Moscow's response will be "quick and tough" and make the culprits feel bitterly sorry for their action.

The warning during Putin's annual state-of-the-nation address came amid a massive Russian military buildup near Ukraine, where cease-fire violations in the seven-year conflict between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces have escalated in recent weeks. The United States and its allies have urged the Kremlin to pull the troops back.

"I hope that no one dares to cross the red line in respect to Russia, and we will determine where it is in each specific case," Putin said. "Those who organize any provocations threatening our core security interests will regret their deeds more than they regretted anything for a long time." Moscow has rejected Ukrainian and Western concerns about the troop buildup, saying it doesn't threaten anyone and that Russia is free to deploy its forces on its territory. But the Kremlin also has warned Ukraine



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures as he gives his annual state of the nation address in Manezh, Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

against trying to use force to retake control of the rebel-held east, saying Russia could be forced to intervene to protect civilians in the region.

"We really don't want to burn the bridges," Putin said. "But if some mistake our good intentions for indifference or weakness and intend to burn or even blow up those bridges themselves, Russia's response will be asymmetrical, quick and tough."

As Putin spoke, a wave

of protests started rolling across Russia's far east in support of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and a human rights group said over 400 were arrested. Thousands later crowded into central Moscow, and police blocked off a square next to the Kremlin. Police in St. Petersburg, police blocked off Palace Square, outside the Hermitage museum, and protesters instead massed along Nevsky Prospekt.

The politician, who is Putin's

most persistent critic and was poisoned with a chemical nerve agent last year, started a hunger strike three weeks ago to protest what he said was inadequate medical treatment and officials' refusal to allow his doctor to visit him. His supporters called the rallies as his health reportedly is in severe decline.

In his speech, Putin pointed to Russia's moves to modernize its nuclear arsenal and said the military would continue to build more

state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles and other new weapons. He added that the development of the nuclear-armed Poseidon underwater drone and the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile is continuing successfully.

In an apparent reference to the U.S. and its allies, the Russian leader denounced those who impose "unlawful, politically motivated economic sanctions and crude attempts to enforce its will on others." He said Russia has shown restraint and often refrained from responding to "openly boorish" actions by others. The Biden administration last week imposed new sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2020 U.S. presidential election and for involvement in the SolarWind hack of federal agencies — activities Moscow has denied. The U.S. ordered 10 Russian diplomats expelled, targeted dozens of companies and individuals, and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money.

Russia retaliated by ordering 10 U.S. diplomats to leave, blacklisting eight current and former U.S. officials, and tightening requirements for U.S. Embassy operations. □

Indonesia searching for missing submarine with 53 on board

By NINIEK KARMINI

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)

— Indonesia's navy is searching for a submarine that went missing north of the resort island of Bali with 53 people on board, the military said Wednesday. Military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said the KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise when it missed a scheduled reporting call.

The submarine is believed to have disappeared in waters about 60 miles (95 kilometers) north of Bali, he said.

Tjahjanto said the navy has deployed scores of ships to search the area, includ-

ing a hydrographic survey ship, and has asked for help from Singapore and Australia, which have submarine rescue vessels.

The Defense Ministry said the submarine lost contact after being granted clearance to dive. It said a helicopter later spotted an oil slick near the dive's starting position.

The submarine was carrying 49 crew members, its commander and three gunners, it said.

The navy said an electrical failure may have occurred during the dive, causing the submarine to lose control and become unable to undertake emergency procedures that would

have allowed it to resurface. It said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet).

The German-built submarine, which has been in service in Indonesia since 1981, was rehearsing for a missile-firing exercise that was to take place on Thursday. Tjahjanto and other military leaders were to attend.

Indonesia currently has a fleet of five submarines and plans to operate at least eight by 2024.

The country, the world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands, has faced growing challenges to its maritime

claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Last year, President Joko

Widodo reaffirmed the country's sovereignty during a visit to the islands at the edge of the South China Sea. □



The Indonesian Navy submarine KRI Nanggala takes part in a drill off Cilegon, Indonesia, in this Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2017 photo. Associated Press

E.U. reaches major climate deal ahead of Biden climate summit

By **RAF CASERT**

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union reached a tentative climate deal that is intended to make the 27-nation bloc climate-neutral by 2050, with member states and parliament agreeing on new carbon emissions targets on the eve of a virtual summit hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden.

"Our political commitment to becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 is now also a legal commitment.

The climate law sets the EU on a green path for a generation," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said early Wednesday.

Under the provisional deal reached after officials negotiated through the night, the EU will also commit itself to an intermediate target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

"It was high time for the agreement, as Europe has to show where it stands in view of the positive developments in the USA and China," said European



In this March 9, 2021 file photo, United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, left, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, center, and European Commissioner for European Green Deal Frans Timmermans pose for photographers prior to a meeting at EU headquarters in Brussels.

Parliament member Peter Liese, the negotiator for the EPP Christian Democrat group.

The 2030 target had been 40%, but under the pressure of increasing evidence of climate change and a more environmentally conscious electorate, it was pushed up, although the EU legislature had wanted a higher target of 60%.

Lawmakers from The Greens specifically complained that too many accounting tricks had been used to reach the level of 55% and that in reality the reduction would equate to a 52.8% reduction of direct emissions.

Its environmental expert, MEP Michael Bloss said EU member nations and parliament "have rushed

through a weak climate law for the sake of a photo-op with President Joe Biden."

The chair of the negotiations, Liberal MEP Pascal Canfin of the Renew Europe group, said finding a middle way was necessary. He said "the compromise reached is ambitious: we will do 2.5 times more in nine years than we have

Associated Press

done in the last 10 years in Europe." The EU deal still needs to be officially approved by member countries and by the European Parliament, although the action should be little more than a rubber stamp.

The United States, the world's second-biggest polluter after China, is preparing to announce its new target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Under Biden, the United States has returned to the 2015 Paris climate accord. Participating nations are set to meet at the annual U.N. climate conference, which is being held in November in Glasgow, Scotland, to push for ambitious targets. The EU said it could blaze a trail for Washington with its decision.

"The U.S. is not our big brother on climate. We are the big brother or the big sister.

So they will be actually encouraged by this. They will be pressed by this," said Jytte Guteland, a S&D socialist MEP and rapporteur on the talks "They will need to deliver when they see what we have accomplished." □

First woman ever applies to run for president of Syria

By **SARAH EL DEEB**

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A woman from the capital Damascus has applied to run for president of Syria, the parliament speaker said Tuesday, making her the first female to make a bid for the country's top job. The largely symbolic election is certain to be won by President Bashar Assad.

The presidential election, the second since the country's civil war broke out 10 years ago, is to be held May 26. Syrians abroad will vote on May 20.

Speaker Hammoud Sabagh said Faten Ali Nahar, a 50-year-old Damascus resident, has nominated herself for the post. Little is known about her. The parliament speaker provided her age, place of birth

and her mother's name in the announcement. There were no reports on who she is on social media.

Two other candidates have submitted their names, including a businessman who ran against

Assad in 2014. Assad won nearly 90% of the votes in that contest. Although Assad has not yet applied, he is widely expected to run and win a fourth seven-year term. He has held power since 2000, when he

took over after the death of his father, who ran the country for 30 years.

Syria only began allowing multi-candidate voting in the 2014 elections. Competition with Assad was symbolic and seen by opposition and Western countries as a sham aimed to give the incumbent president a veneer of legitimacy.

The international community is unlikely to recognize the legitimacy of the upcoming elections. According to the U.N. resolution for a political resolution of the conflict in Syria, a new constitution is supposed to be drafted and approved in a public referendum before U.N.-monitored presidential elections are to take place. But little progress has been made on the

drafting committee and Assad continues to have the backing of Russia and Iran.

Last month, the Biden administration said it will not recognize the result of Syria's presidential election unless the voting is free, fair, supervised by the United Nations and represents all of Syrian society.

Syria has been in the throes of civil war since 2011, when Arab Spring-inspired protests against the Assad family rule turned into an armed insurgency in response to a brutal military crackdown.

Separately, Assad appointed a new governor to the Central Bank on Tuesday days after sacking his predecessor amid a crushing currency crisis. □



In this April 13, 2016 file photo, a Syrian election official waits for voters at a polling station with posters of President Bashar Assad during the parliamentary election in Damascus, Syria.

Associated Press

DiCaprio, Fonda urge U.S. not to sign climate deal with Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Dozens of celebrities including actors Leonardo DiCaprio, Jane Fonda and Joaquin Phoenix on Tuesday called on U.S. President Joe Biden to refrain from signing any environmental agreement with his Brazilian counterpart, Jair Bolsonaro.

The open letter signed by the artists comes just days Bolsonaro joins dozens of other foreign leaders at a U.S.-led summit to tackle the climate crisis, which will be held online.

The U.S. and Brazil have been holding bilateral talks since February, and Bolsonaro's environment minister has been outspoken about his desire for U.S. financial support for Amazon preservation.

Artists said they sided with Indigenous peoples and civil society groups that have expressed concern about a possible deal with Brazil's conservative leader. The letter was supported by several non-profit groups, including AmazonWatch. "We urge your Administration to hear their call and not commit to any agree-



An Indigenous woman with her daughter holds the Portuguese sign "Get out Bolsonaro" to protest Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's proposals to allow mining on Indigenous lands, outside the Planalto presidential palace in Brasilia, Brazil, on National Indigenous Day, Monday, April 19, 2021. Associated Press

ments with Brazil at this time," the letter read. "The integrity of this critical ecosystem is nearing a tipping point due to increasing threats to the rainforest and its Indigenous guardians by the Bolsonaro Administration, including deforestation, fires and attacks on

human rights."

Since taking office in January 2019, Bolsonaro has sided with powerful agribusiness interests, attacked environmental activists and aligned foreign policy with former President Donald Trump. Meanwhile, deforestation in the Amazon, the

world's largest rainforest, has surged toward its worst level since 2008.

The press office of Vice President Hamilton Mourão confirmed on Tuesday that deforestation in March had decimated over 360 square kilometers (138 square miles) of forest, up

12% compared to March 2020, and the highest in at least five years.

Since Biden's inauguration, his administration has made gestures seeking to convey it could be a trusted environmental partner. Brazil is seeking \$1 billion in foreign funding to support efforts to reduce deforestation by 30% to 40% in one year, environment minister Ricardo Salles recently said. While Brazil says it needs funding in order to show any improvements in the Amazon, critics have urged Biden not to give any money without results. Bolsonaro wrote a letter to Biden earlier this month in which he said support from the U.S. government and private sector would be welcome, but without establishing a dollar-figure amount.

On April 16, Biden's special climate envoy, John Kerry, said on Twitter that he was looking forward "to immediate actions and engagement with indigenous populations and civil society so this announcement can deliver tangible results." □

Colombia peace court alarmed over killings of former rebels

By **MANUEL RUEDA**
Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—Colombia's postwar reconciliation tribunal said Monday that violence against former guerrilla

fighters and community leaders is increasing in rural areas and jeopardizing its attempts to investigate crimes that took place during six decades of conflict that killed an estimated

260,000 people and forced millions to flee their homes.

The court known as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace was set up in 2016 following a peace deal between the government of Colombia and the country's biggest guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

On Monday, the tribunal's president said that at least 276 former rebels have been killed since laying down their weapons in December 2016 and that 900 community leaders have been slain as well. The court said that 252 of those former rebels had been summoned to collaborate with its investigations. □



In this Dec. 14, 2018 file photo, a clerk goes over court files at the headquarter of the Special Peace Jurisdiction in Bogota, Colombia.

Associated Press

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Travellers' Choice 2020

Chef Matt Bolan and Chief Engineer Ramon Avila Perez retire from the Hilton

PALM BEACH — The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino hosted an informal celebration of culinary veteran Executive Chef, Matt Boland and Director of Engineering, Ramon Avila Perez.

Both Boland and Avila Perez will be taking their years of knowledge and experience and applying them to personal endeavours. Executive Chef Boland will be supporting his son Mikey in furthering his culinary aspirations, and Avila Perez will be reuniting with his family in his native home of Puerto Rico.

With extensive training in classic French kitchens in Paris, Boland's award-winning accomplishments and creativity earned him executive chef assignments at some of Aruba's major resorts, gaining celebrity chef status on Aruba. He shares he had the privilege to work at the Grande Dame of Palm Beach for eight years under the Radisson flag and for more than three years as the chief of the Hilton's culinary brigade.

Under his direction, the resort's famed steakhouse, Sunset Grille, became a AAA Four Diamond restaurant, one of only two restaurants to receive this achievement in Aruba. Boland has cooked at the prestigious James Beard House in New York City, "a career milestone for any chef," he says, and secured Hilton Aruba's restaurants' status as perennial traveler favorites.

Chief Engineer Avila Perez was internationally recruited to come and work in Aruba, and during his time on island – almost 4 years - he fell in love with the property and its Team Members.

According to General Manager Vasco Baselli, Avila Perez is "leaving the Grande Dame in great shape", fresher and prettier, having upgraded and refurbished many systems and procedures giving the iconic resort a renewed lease on life.



In his farewell notes, Avila Perez expressed great pleasure for leaving his beloved engineering department in the hands of a highly-qualified woman, Nephtaly Croes, who will oversee the departments' activities moving forward. Nephtaly is the resort's first female to lead the engineering department.

Both retiring department heads were presented with fresh flower bouquets, letters of appreciation and gifts at a small social distanced gathering at Mira Solo Lobby Bar, in the presence of their fellow Department Heads Glenn Farro, Director of Human Resources, and Vasco v. Baselli, General Manager.

Both Farro and Baselli thanked Boland & Avila Perez for their years of service, and wished them the very best on their new adventures, free to enjoy the fruits of their labor, children, grandchildren, and their hobbies.

Baselli spoke on behalf of the entire team. "I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the hard work and professionalism that you have demonstrated over the past years at our beloved hotel," he said. "Your commitment and dedication have always been an inspiration to your colleagues, supervisors and managers, who will certainly miss working with you. During your time at our hotel you have lived through many changes and challenges and have always risen to meet them while exceeding guests' expectations. You represent what has always defined this resort, the warmth and genuine hospitality of its Team Members. As you start a new chapter in your life, we congratulate you, and wish to extend a heartfelt Ma-sha Danki, for a job well done." □

Happy Earth day



ORANJESTAD — April 22, 2021, will mark 51 years of Earth Day. This is our motherland, which only gives us and takes nothing back from us. So it is our responsibility to save and protect our motherland.

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated on April 22, to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EARTHDAY.ORG (formerly Earth Day Network) including 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.

In 1969 at a UNESCO Conference in San Francisco, peace activist John McConnell proposed a day to honor the Earth and the concept of peace, to first be observed on March 21, 1970, the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere. This day of nature's equipoise was later sanctioned in a proclamation written by McConnell and signed by Secretary General U Thant at the United Nations. A month later a United States Senator Gaylord Nelson proposed the idea to hold a nationwide environmental teach-in on April 22, 1970. He hired a young activist, Denis Hayes, to be the National Coordinator. Nelson and Hayes renamed the event "Earth Day". Denis and his staff grew the event beyond the original idea for a teach-in to include the entire United States. More than 20 million people poured out on the streets, and the first Earth Day remains the largest single day protest in human history. Key non-environmentally focused partners played major roles. Under the leadership of labor leader Walter Reuther, for example, the United Auto Workers was the most instrumental outside financial and operational supporter of the first Earth Day. According to Hayes, "Without the UAW, the first Earth Day would have likely flopped! Nelson was later awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom award in recognition of his work. □

Photo courtesy of Aruba Flora & Fauna

Tips for an unforgettable vacation in Aruba!

ORANJESTAD — We know how stressful preparing for a trip can be, that's why we've put together a list of tips for you to take away some of that stress. We want to help make your vacation unforgettable!

Clothes

The weather in Aruba can be pretty hot, so take clothes with you that are not too warm. Keep in mind that there is always a steady breeze in Aruba, making the warm weather bearable. Of course, don't forget your swimwear. At night, the temperature more or less stays the same. For cooler evenings you might want to pack a light sweater, just in case. There is no need to pack your rain jacket. Rain generally passes by relatively quickly; the sun will soon make its appearance again!

Language

Even though the main language in Aruba is Papiamentu, most people can speak and understand Dutch and English too. Many people also speak and understand Spanish.

Money

The currency in Aruba is the florin (Awg. or Afl.), but US dollars are accepted everywhere. You can withdraw both florins and US dollars from several ATMs (not all) if you want to keep using US dollars. Otherwise you need to go to the bank or casino to exchange your money. Most places, like shops and hotels, grant a rate of exchange ranging from Awg. 1.75 to Awg. 1.80 per US dollar.

Getting around

There are several ways to get around on the island. The most convenient way is by car, but you can find other ways to get from point A to point B.

- **Taxi:** A great way to get around is to call a taxi. In Aruba, it's not usual to hail a cab off the street, you will find a taxi parked at most resorts or tourist area. There are lots of different cabs you can call, and they are all familiar with the places you want to go to. The prices are fixed prices regulated by the government of Aruba. You pay for the cab, not the amount of people.
- **Car rental:** Renting a car is also a safe and easy way to get around on the island. There are dozens of car rentals with good quality cars.
- **Bike rental:** Renting a bike is a bit more dan-



gerous. Since there are no biking lanes, it is harder to get around. You have to ride on the same road as cars do, which can be tricky sometimes.

Rules of the Road

- **Drive on the right side of the road.**
- **There is a predominance of roundabouts instead of traffic lights at major intersections, which is a change that has been implemented in Aruba in recent years.**
- **Right-hand turns:** Right-hand turns are always forbidden on red lights (unlike in the U.S.).
- **Speed Limits:** Note that speed limits in Aruba are posted at kilometers per hour.
- **Overtaking:** Many streets in Aruba are one-way streets, so overtaking should be done with extreme caution.
- **Entering vehicles must yield to vehicles that are already in the roundabout.** Also, at all intersections, traffic coming from the right has the right of way. The amber light used at traffic lights is to signal caution, as the traffic light is to turn from green to red.
- **Seat Belts:** Seatbelts must be worn at all times in Aruba.
- **Cell Phones:** Talking on the phone is illegal while driving in Aruba, and can lead to hefty fines and court action, and even imprisonment. If you want to talk on the phone, you must set your device to hands-free mode.
- **Alcohol Use:** The maximum permitted blood alcohol level is 50 mg per 100 ml of blood, which means that one drink will take you over the legal limit. So, please call a taxi if you've been drinking.
- **Gas/fuel stations:** The price of gas is regulated by the government of Aruba and is the same everywhere on the island. You will also be pumping gas in liters, and 1 gallon equals 3.78 liters. Current gas prices are: Gasoline unleaded premium: 221.6 cents p / ltr. Diesel LS: 175.8 cents p / ltr.

Protect your skin

When in Aruba, don't forget to protect your skin with sunscreen every couple of hours, especially after swimming. If you're looking to get a nice tan, still use sunscreen. You can use regular sunscreen, or you can use the water resistant aloe vera sunscreen. The aloe vera in sunscreen is locally grown in Aruba. You can find aloe vera everywhere!

Tipping

In Aruba it's not mandatory to tip, but it's your choice if you do so. However, some restaurants and bars add service charge to your bill. Usually, this adds up to about 10 to 15 percent on food and beverages. If you really like the service, you can still tip, of course!

Chargers

You also want to make sure you can charge your phone, camera or laptop. If you're from the USA or Canada, you don't have to worry. Aruba adopted the voltage standard of 110V, the same as in the USA and Canada. However, if you're not from the USA or Canada, you might want to check if your devices need 220V or 110V, then you may need a converter. You can buy these in your home country or in Aruba at hardware stores or supermarkets.

No need to buy water

The tap water in Aruba is of high quality and perfectly safe to drink.

Emergencies

Let's hope it's not necessary, but it's good to know. In case of an emergency, you can call 911 for an ambulance or the fire department and for the police, you can call 100.

Keep in mind to wash your hands frequently, wear your face mask at all times, avoid crowded areas, practice social distance and adhere to all rules and protocols. Have a fun and unforgettable vacation! ☐



Star Dust

By: Carlos M. Viana, Board Certified Clinical Nutritionist (USA)

ORANJESTAD — Over a billion years ago massive stars exploded creating several new metals. One of these, magnesium began its interstellar journey, destined to play a major role in our physical bodies. Magnesium is an essential mineral for life, involved in body functions ranging from energy production to cell communication.

Magnesium deficiency has major implications for health. The average intake of magnesium tends to be under the normally recommended amount. Causes include low dietary intake, alcoholism, diarrhea, increased urinary loss, poor absorption from the intestines, and diabetes. Medications may also cause low magnesium, including proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) to reduce stomach acid and water pills. When we see low magnesium levels in your blood test, we know the pancreas is inflamed and the liver is developing scars.

Many medical complaints are often magnesium deficiency. Low magnesium can cause constipation, tiredness, generalized

weakness, muscle cramps, abnormal heart rhythms, increased irritability of the nervous system with tremors, burning or prickling sensation that is usually felt in the hands, arms, legs, or feet, perceived abnormalities of the heartbeat, low potassium levels in the blood, hypoparathyroidism which might result in low calcium levels in the blood, calcification of your joints, abnormal muscle tightness and muscular spasms, migraines, epileptic seizures, brain calcifications and in extreme and prolonged cases coma, intellectual disability or death.

Magnesium plays an important role in carbohydrate metabolism. Deficiency may worsen insulin resistance, a condition that often precedes diabetes, or may be a consequence of insulin resistance. Type two diabetes (T2D) is insulin resistance when cells in your muscles, fat, and liver do not respond well to insulin and cannot use glucose from your blood for energy. To make up for it, your pancreas makes more insulin. The high amount of insulin produces high blood pressure, makes you gain body fat, what is called metabolic syndrome. Eventually, untreated, your blood sug-

ar levels go up.

Truly relevant today, magnesium deficiency is a common and yet underdiagnosed problem. Magnesium deficiency has been seen in 50% of all ICU patients. These patients requiring mechanical ventilation and have significantly higher morbidity and mortality rate. All because an easily preventable problem. Magnesium is an essential cofactor for over 300 reactions in the body, yet research estimates that approximately 75% of Americans are not receiving the proper daily recommended dietary allowance (RDA). This also means our children are not getting enough sufficient magnesium either. The easiest way for parents to spot a magnesium deficiency in their child is to see if they exhibit signs of poor sleep habits and constipation.

In general, rich sources of magnesium are greens, nuts, seeds, dry beans, whole grains, wheat germ, wheat, and oat bran. The recommended dietary allowance for magnesium for adult men is 400-420 mg per day. The dietary allowance for adult women is 310-320 mg per day. I always recommend supple-



ments given to children be dosed according to their body weight (mg/kg) by a nutritionist or qualified health practitioner.

The best way to insure you are getting sufficient magnesium is to take a dietary supplement after the biggest meal. Magnesium is a very safe supplement. Unlike many nutrients, magnesium is eliminated from the body daily—in fact, it needs to be replaced about every 12 hours. Also, the body has a built-in failsafe mechanism: when there is too much magnesium, it is excreted through the bowels,

which is why many people find relief using magnesium for constipation. Be sure to get a high-quality magnesium to ensure absorption. I have noted cheaper, tablets exiting the body without being digested.

Get The Point! As the world turns to healthier, home cooked meals, Phyllis and I are even more careful to choose the freshest, local, organic produce possible, many from our own container garden. Using our blood/metabolic type food list, we still add quality food supplements. Magnesium helps keep our blood pressure normal, bones strong, and the heart rhythm steady. How blessed are we, that from the death of a star, the universe sent us star dust for a healthy life. □

CARLOS VIANA, Ph. D. is an Oriental Medical Doctor (O.M.D.) having studied in China; a US Board Cert. Clinical Nutritionist (C.C.N.), an Addiction Professional (C.Ad.), Chairperson of the Latin American Committee of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), a Rejuvenating Cell Therapist specializing in Age Management, has a weekly radio program, writes and lectures extensively. For information: VIANA HEALING CENTER, Kibaima 7, St Cruz TEL: 585-1270 Web Site: www.vianaheal.com.



Edmunds: 5 smart ways to use your tax return on a car

By **RONALD MONTOYA**
Edmunds

Tax season will be coming to a close later than usual this year, due to the May 17 extended deadline. Until that time, you might hear advertisements from car dealerships urging you to bring in your refund or pandemic stimulus check to buy a new car. Given that the average tax refund issued in 2020 was \$2,741, according to the IRS, it is a solid amount that people often use to make major purchases.

What's the best way to spend extra cash from your stimulus money or tax refund if you do decide to apply it to your next or current vehicle? Edmunds' experts have five suggestions.

USE IT AS A DOWN PAYMENT

The ideal down payment is one that's large enough to give you a comfortable monthly payment yet still allows you to keep some money in your emergency savings account. But this has been harder for many shoppers to do as vehicle prices have risen over the years. The extra cash from the tax refund or stimulus check can make for or bolster a good down payment. A larger down payment does a number of things to help people in securing a car loan. First, it shows the lender how serious the buyer is about taking on a loan. It also reduces the



In this Dec. 27, 2020 photo a prospective buyer surveys a long row of unsold 2020 pickup trucks at a Ram dealership in Littleton, Colo.

likelihood of the buyer owing more on the loan than the car is worth. Most importantly, the reduction of the loan amount means a smaller payment to fit better into a buyer's budget. That, in turn, makes it easier to get approved.

MAKE A LARGE DRIVE-OFF PAYMENT ON A LEASE

Normally, Edmunds recommends that you spend only the drive-off fees, usually the first month's payment, registration and the startup fees, to begin a new lease. However, if you start your lease with a larger down payment, the monthly

lease payments will be a lot lower. Not only are lower payments easier to manage, but if you want to extend the lease, you may be allowed to continue to pay this lower amount on a month-to-month basis. This strategy sets you up for more affordable payments and flexibility if you choose to extend the lease.

If you plan to do this, however, check your contract carefully to make sure it is allowed. Some leasing companies have different rules. And make sure your drive-off payment is protected by gap insurance in

the event of an accident in the first few months of driving.

PAY DOWN AN EXISTING CAR LOAN

Some people might consider using their tax refund to knock down the balance on their existing loan so they are carrying less debt. There are two ways to do that: Make an extra payment or two, or pay down the balance. Making extra payments means you pay off the loan sooner. Paying down the balance will reduce the amount of interest paid over time. Call your lender to determine

the best way to proceed if you want to go either of these routes.

REFINANCE YOUR CURRENT LOAN

Are you an unfortunate used-car buyer who's been saddled with a 12% interest loan? By refinancing at today's more competitive rates, you could potentially slash your monthly payments in half. If your car loan has a high interest rate, or you have improved your credit rating since you took out the loan, you could use your tax refund as an opportunity to structure a better loan. Use all or part of the refund to reduce the principal on the loan and get a better interest rate on the balance.

FIX OR UPGRADE YOUR CURRENT VEHICLE

A set of new tires can improve your vehicle's ride quality, braking performance, quietness and even fuel economy. You can also treat your car to that major service that you've been putting off because it's expensive. Inexpensive repairs that can go a long way to rekindling your pride of ownership include clearing foggy headlights, getting a thorough detail, and repairing interior rips and tears. Dent removal and paint touch-ups can often be done by a mobile service for just a few hundred dollars. □

Associated Press

Amazon begins rollout of pay-by-palm at Whole Foods near HQ

By **JOSEPH PISANI**
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon is rolling out pay-by-palm technology at some Whole Foods grocery stores near its headquarters to make paying quicker and more convenient.

The technology, called Amazon One, lets shoppers scan the palm of their hand and connect it to a credit card or Amazon account. After the initial set up, which Amazon says takes less than a minute, shoppers can scan their

hand at the register to pay for groceries without having to open their wallets. Amazon first launched the technology late last year and at the time said the technology could be used at stadiums, office buildings and other retailers. So far, Amazon hasn't announced any takers. It has been put into use in several of its cashier-less stores and Amazon said it has signed up thousands of users, but didn't provide a specific number. Privacy experts have warned against the

use by companies of biometric data, such as face or palm scans, because of the risk of it being hacked and stolen. Amazon said it keeps the palm images in a secure part of its cloud and doesn't store the information on the Amazon One device. The company said shoppers can also ask for their information to be deleted at any time.

A Whole Foods store in Amazon's hometown of Seattle started using the technology on Wednesday. Seven additional Whole



In this March 4, 2020 file photo, people walk out of an Amazon Go store, in Seattle.

Associated Press

Foods locations in the area will have it installed in the coming months. Amazon declined to say if or when

other locations might get it. There are about 500 Whole Foods stores across the country. □

E.U. outlines ambitious AI regulations focused on risky uses

By **KELVIN CHAN**
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Risky uses of artificial intelligence that threaten people's safety or rights such as live facial scanning should be banned or tightly controlled, European Union officials said Wednesday as they outlined an ambitious package of proposed regulations to rein in the rapidly expanding technology. The draft regulations from the EU's executive commission include rules for applications deemed high risk such as AI systems to filter out school, job or loan applicants. They would also ban artificial intelligence outright in a few cases considered too risky, such as government "social scoring" systems that judge people based on their behavior.

The proposals are the 27-nation bloc's latest move to maintain its role as the world's standard-bearer for technology regulation, as it tries to keep up with the world's two big tech superpowers, the U.S. and China. EU officials say they are taking a four-level "risk-based approach" that seeks to balance important rights such as privacy against the need to encourage innovation. "With these landmark rules, the EU is spearheading the development of new global norms to make sure AI



European Commissioner for Europe fit for the Digital Age Margrethe Vestager, left, and European Commissioner in charge of internal market Thierry Breton participate in a media conference on an EU approach to artificial intelligence, following a weekly meeting of EU Commissioners, at EU headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

can be trusted," Margrethe Vestager, the European Commission's executive vice president for the digital age, said in a statement. "By setting the standards, we can pave the way for to ethical technology worldwide and ensure that the EU remains competitive along the way."

To be sure, the draft rules have a long way to go before they take effect. They need to be reviewed by the European Parliament and the European Council and could be amended in a process that could take

several years, though officials declined to give a specific timeframe.

Previous EU tech regulation efforts have been far reaching and influential, earning it a reputation as a pioneer. Vestager, also the bloc's competition chief, filed aggressive antitrust challenges against Silicon Valley giants like Google years before such action became fashionable.

The EU was also early to the data privacy battle with stringent rules known as General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR,

that became the de facto global standard.

However, results have been mixed: Google still retains its online dominance and EU privacy cases against global tech companies are backed up. Officials are also working on updating the EU's digital rulebook to protect internet users from harmful material or rogue traders.

Under the AI proposals, unacceptable uses would also include manipulating behavior, exploiting children's vulnerabilities or using subliminal techniques.

"It can be a case where a toy uses voice systems to manipulate a child into doing something dangerous," Vestager told a media briefing. "Such uses have no place in Europe and therefore we propose to ban them."

The proposals include a prohibition in principle on controversial "remote biometric identification," such as the use of live facial recognition to pick people out of crowds in real time, because "there is no room for mass surveillance in our society," Vestager said.

There will, however, be an exception for narrowly defined law enforcement purposes such as searching for a missing child or a wanted person or preventing a terror attack. But some EU lawmakers and digital rights groups want the carve-out removed over fears it could be used by authorities to justify widespread future use of the technology, which they say is intrusive and inaccurate.

Biometric and mass surveillance technology "in our public spaces undermines our freedom and threatens our open societies," said Patrick Breyer, an EU Pirate party lawmaker.

"We cannot allow the discrimination of certain groups of people and the false incrimination of countless individuals by these technologies". □

Associated Press

Daily Mail owner files antitrust suit against Google in U.S.

By **TALI ARBEL**
AP Technology Writer

The owner of the Daily Mail website, Associated Newspapers, is suing Google, saying the tech company's dominance in online advertising has harmed its business.

The suit, filed Monday in federal court in New York, says Google punishes publishers' search results if they don't sell enough ad space through Google and that its control over the ad market depresses prices for publishers.

"Google wields its mo-

nopoly search engine to entrench its ad-tech domi-

nance," the suit alleges, citing instances when Daily



In this Oct. 20, 2015 file photo is signage outside Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

Associated Press

Mail's traffic from search fell unexpectedly.

The company says that since the beginning of 2021, its U.S. search traffic to its website, known for celebrity photos and tabloid stories, has dropped by more than 50%.

Google said in an emailed statement that the Daily Mail's claims are inaccurate and that use of its ad tech tools "has no bearing" on a publisher's search results in Google. The company said it will defend against the claims. Google commands about

29% of the U.S. digital ad market, according to eMarketer. Facebook takes 25% of it and Amazon, 10%.

Federal and state antitrust authorities have sued Google. The Justice Department alleges that Google abuses its dominance in online search and advertising.

It's also not the first time Google has faced an antitrust suit from a publisher. A West Virginia newspaper company, HD Media, sued Google and Facebook in January. □

Classifieds

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Week 9/1218 (15k);
Week 10/1207 (15k);
Week 11/1419 (13k);
Week 13/1509 (13k);
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Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	7		8		6		4	
5			2					3
		2				1		
7							9	2
				8				
9	6							8
		9				4		
3					4			6
	1		9		8		7	

Difficulty Level ★★ ★

4/22

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Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editors

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)
Richard Brooks
Linda Reijnders

Sales

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto
Pilar Flores

Columnists

Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @arubatoday



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

ImSan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

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Oranjestad:

del Pueblo Tel. 582 1253

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
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Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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FAVI- Visually Impaired
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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118



facebook.com/arubatoday/

Updated field guides, other titles lure readers outdoors

By **JULIA RUBIN**
Associated Press

The new season of spring shows has begun, and viewership is way up by all accounts. We're not talking about screens, which we've all been glued to during the pandemic. Less noticed is another trend: people tuning in to nature for quieter, real-life, high-stakes drama. From new Audubon field guides, updated for the first time in decades, to a book of poetry about insects, publishers are trying to meet this moment: Not only is public engagement with nature high, but so is concern over climate change. "Nature has been a point of solace for people over the course of the pandemic that they can tap into, either for the first time, or tap into it again," says John Rowden, senior director of bird-friendly communities for the National Audubon Society.

Audubon has seen an uptick in interest in its social media platforms, local chapters and programming since the start of the pandemic, he said. The new updates to the million-selling field guides include conservation information; Rowden hopes readers will be inspired to pitch in to save habitat where they can. "There are existential threats against a lot of the wildlife we share the planet with," he says. "It's not an easy message. But there are things we can do." This past year's turn toward nature took many forms. For some people, it meant simply paying more attention to the wildlife out the

window, maybe getting a good pair of binoculars to help. Others hiked deeper into parks and woods, or looked harder at what's growing and foraging on

American birds could face extinction from climate change. The bird guide covers more than 800 species, with over 3,500 full-color photographs; the tree

to a fly rubbing his legs together on a sunny morning in 12th century China, to Walt Whitman's "noiseless, patient spider," to Mary Oliver's shivering "Great

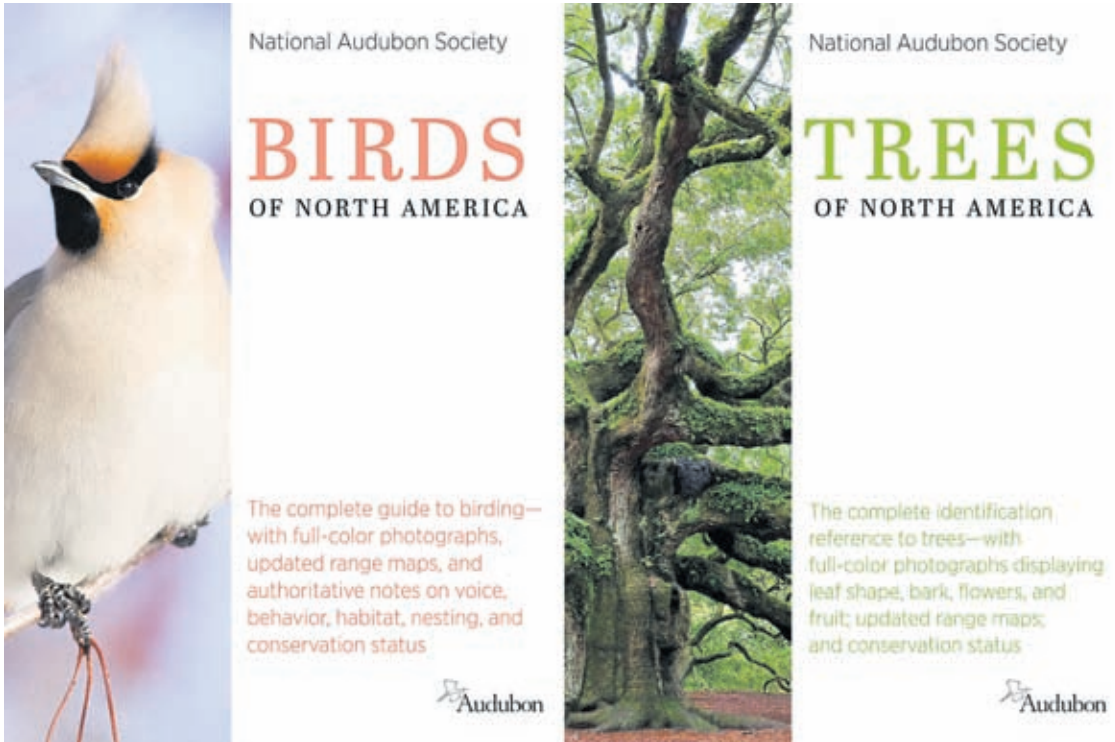
Chapters," by Andrew H. Knoll (Harper Collins) A Harvard geologist and natural history professor charts the planet's history in accessible style, from its beginning as "a small planet accreted out of rocky debris circling a modest young star" through the development of minerals, geographical formations, atmosphere, and life forms large and small. — "Flower: Exploring the World in Bloom" (Phaidon) This heavy, glossy coffee-table book explores how flowers and floral motifs have been used over the ages in art, fashion and design. There's also a timeline of the history of flowers, and a rundown of the symbolism and significance accrued to some species over the centuries.

— "The Glitter in the Green: In Search of Hummingbirds," by Jon Dunn (Basic Books)

A natural history writer and photographer, Dunn travels up and down the full range of these tiny birds, which now live only in the Americas, from near the Arctic Circle to the tip of South America. He writes not only about how they live and are faring, but about their history as a subject of fascination and exploitation.

— "50 Things to Do at the Beach," by Easkey Britton (Princeton Architectural Press)

Kids at the beach can go deeper — literally and figuratively — into the sea with tips from environmental scientist and professional surfer Britton. Part of the publisher's "Explore More" series (previous titles include "50 Things to See in the Sky" and "50 Things to Do in the Wild"), this book explores our connection to the ocean and its health. □



This combination of cover images shows "Birds of North America," left, and "Trees of North America" by the National Audubon Society.

Associated Press

their street. Many turned to gardening, even if that meant just putting a couple flower pots on a balcony. The new titles mentioned here are about upping your knowledge of birds, bugs, plants and other life in this second pandemic spring. And if books are too heavy to carry on a walk, there are many apps (often free) to help identify and learn about species, including Merlin Bird ID by the Cornell Lab; iNaturalist and PlantSnap. Audubon has a native-plant database based on ZIP codes at Audubon.org. Some new titles: — "Birds of North America," and "Trees of North America," from the National Audubon Society (Knopf). "Birds" was last updated in 1994, "Trees" in 1980, and there's lots of new science and wowza photography to share. The biggest change is the inclusion of conservation status, and both guides include range maps that show the impact of climate change for each species. A recent Audubon report found that up to two-thirds of North

guide has more than 540 species, nearly 2,500 full-color photographs. — "A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds," by Scott Weidensaul (W.W. Norton) Thanks to technological advances like miniaturized geolocators, we are learning much more about the extraordinarily arduous and lengthy migration of many birds. Weidensaul, a Pulitzer Prize finalist for his past work on birds, follows the course of some of these global migrations. In one breathtaking passage, he describes looking at a radar map one fall night over the northeastern U.S. and seeing "immense blobs of pale blue and green, the radar signature of millions of songbirds aloft in the clear night on their way south." A couple million birds an hour (yes, an hour) might pass overhead on such a night, he writes, unseen by us because of the darkness. — "Buzz Words: Poems About Insects" (Everyman's Library, Alfred A. Knopf) From a dew-drunk cicada that inspired a first-century poem in Ancient Greece,

Moth," this anthology of poems shows that watching bugs is as old as civilization. Here, they're categorized lightly into sections on workers, singers, sparklers, swoopers, gliders, leapers, weavers, crawlers, stingers, biters, suckers and pests. At a time when many insect species are also at risk, including some of the most beneficial ones to humans, this small volume appreciates insects and our eternal love-hate relationship with them. — "Lessons from Plants," by Beronda L. Montgomery (Harvard University Press) Montgomery, a biochemistry professor at Michigan State University, aims "to increase plant awareness, mitigate potential biases against plants, and introduce you to the wisdom of plants and what they can teach us." She looks at how plants experience the world, independent of people, imagining what life looks like from their perspective. "As humans we must first pay attention," she writes. — "A Brief History of Earth: Four Billion Years in Eight

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Stricker busy as ever with hard work still to come

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

Few players are keeping a busier schedule than Steve Stricker, and he still has five months to go before he captains the American team in the Ryder Cup. It's never far from his thoughts, even with so much on his plate.

Take last week, for example. Stricker decided to move from his winter home in Naples, Florida, and it sold so quickly that he and wife Nicki had to pack up and move out. That ordinarily would not have been a problem, except that Stricker was in the middle of playing the Chubb Classic on the PGA Tour Champions.

"Golf was the calming part," he said Tuesday. "We were packing this pod we had in the driveway, and then we'd get in the car to go to the course. It was interesting. I didn't even think about golf when we were at the house."

Maybe he should try that more often. Stricker closed with a 5-under 67 and held off a pack that included Bernhard Langer and Fred Couples for a one-shot victory, his sixth PGA Tour Champions title.

Then it was back to his permanent home in Wisconsin. He spoke Tuesday while making the two-hour drive to Whistling Straits to inspect changes to the Ryder Cup course.

The course is still closed, even with green grass for what Stricker described as an early spring in Wisconsin. He didn't mention the nature of the changes except to say it was "nothing huge." The purpose was to make sure it was coming together, and a rare week at home afforded him some time.

Then it's off to Ohio this weekend where his oldest daughter, Bobbi Maria, is playing for Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship. From there, the 54-year-old Stricker will head back to Florida for the Valspar Championship on the PGA Tour and a chance to split

duties. He wants to keep an eye on U.S. players who might be playing for him in September at Whistling Straits. He also wants to play well for himself so he can keep playing in August. Stricker wants to make the PGA Tour postseason one last time. In only eight PGA Tour starts, he is No. 124 in the FedEx Cup.

As for his team, Stricker

is watching and waiting, equal parts.

Six players will qualify on their own. Still to come are three major championships and two FedEx Cup playoff events before qualifying ends. And then after the Tour Championship, Stricker will add the other six.

That's a long way off, though every week the list seems to get longer. □



Steve Stricker plays his shot from the sixth tee during the second round of the U.S. Open Golf Championship in Mamaroneck, N.Y., in this Friday, Sept. 18, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press



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Opt-out decisions throw wrench into NFL draft options



This Oct. 5, 2019, file photo shows Virginia Tech defensive back Caleb Farley, right, intercepting a pass intended for Miami wide receiver Dee Wiggins, left, during the first half of an NCAA college football game, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Pro Football Writer

Caleb Farley was the first top prospect to make the decision that has added a whole new layer of uncertainty to the annual crapshoot that is the NFL draft. The talented Virginia Tech cornerback decided back in July to skip the 2020 season because of the coronavirus. Having lost his mother to cancer in 2018, Farley was unwilling to put another loved one at risk and felt it would be safer to skip the season no matter the impact on his draft status. Farley had plenty of players follow his lead, including several others set to be high draft picks next week such as LSU receiver Ja'Marr Chase, Oregon tackle Penei Sewell, Northwestern tackle Rashawn Slater and Penn State linebacker Micah Parsons. Now it's up to NFL teams to figure out how much to weigh those decisions in their draft evaluations and how to project what kind of prospects they will be. "We're talking about top 10, top 15 players that you haven't seen in over a year," ESPN draft ana-

lyst Todd McShay said. "It's challenging. It really is because you don't know where they are physically. There's a difference between working out and being in good shape and then football shape. I think it's going to play a big part into this year's draft in terms of teams just wanting to know what they see." McShay said he believes some teams will opt to take players who played in 2020 over those who sat out if the grades are similar but most of those top players are still expected to go off the board in the top half of the first round. Farley has another factor complicating his situation after undergoing back surgery in March. He is expected to be ready for the start of training camp and has no regrets on his decision, even after being forced to skip his pro day workouts because of the injury. Longtime draft analyst Gil Brandt, who spent nearly three decades with the Dallas Cowboys, likened the players sitting out 2020 to those who missed seasons in the military during the Vietnam War.

Brandt said those players rarely came back at the same level, but the situation with Farley and the others is far different since they were able to work out and spend extra time studying film and working on technique that they believe will help them in the NFL. "That's all I've been doing is breaking down offensive coordinators and learning from some of my mentors and guys in the NFL who have been playing the position for a long time," Farley said. "Learning new techniques. I've truly grown and got better in my fundamentals. I'm just excited to get around a staff, a new defensive backs coach, a new defensive coordinator so I know I can just be a sponge and soak up everything they have to offer." While players such as Sewell and Chase are still expected to be top 10 picks, others such as Miami defensive end Gregory Rousseau, Washington pass rusher Joe Tryon, Memphis running back Kenneth Gainwell and Central Florida cornerback Tay Gowan might have missed out on

opportunities to build on promising 2019 seasons that would have improved their draft stock. Even several of the top prospects who didn't opt out of the entire 2020 season have limited film with some such as Alabama receiver Jaylen Waddle missing significant time with injuries, South Carolina cornerback Jaycee Horn shutting his season down early after coach Will Muschamp was fired and North Dakota State QB Trey Lance playing just one showcase game in the fall before the Bison had their full spring season in FCS. That lack of game film could lead to some difficult choices for decision-makers such as Cincinnati's Duke Tobin, who could be contemplating taking a player such as Chase or Sewell with the fifth pick despite not getting to see them play in 2020. "You're projecting, it's probably a bigger projection than when you studied a guy that's played three years of college football," Tobin said. "That's our job, to project them into our league into our system and

scheme and into our division and what we do. It's a year like no other." The reasons for opting out vary for each player and teams are doing their homework to figure out why before making a big investment. Several players in the Big Ten and Pac-12 began preparing for the draft when those conferences announced in the summer that they wouldn't have a fall season only to change directions later and opt for a shorter campaign after some of those players had already signed with agents. Many chose to sit out at that point rather than pay back an agent to regain eligibility. "You can't knock them for that. They're trying to get themselves ready for the next 40 years of their lives," Raiders general manager Mike Mayock said. "Why did the kid opt out? Did he have sick parents at home? Did he have to get a job? There are some differentiations in that whole opt-out thing that I think you have to get to the root of why did the kid opt out, number one." While nearly all of the players had good reasons for their choices, it doesn't mean that the lack of game film won't give second thoughts to teams. But the players also are quick to point out that it wasn't like they put the time to waste. Many worked with specific-position coaches to help hone their craft to prepare them for the NFL. Northwestern offensive lineman Rashawn Slater, a projected first-round pick, spent his time training with Duke Manyweather. "I was a much-improved player going into my senior year but now even more so," Slater said. "Just training with Duke, he's a master. Every single day I was learning something new. He taught me how to move more efficiently, how to leverage better and how to just be more powerful and explosive off the ball, stuff like that. My technique has shot up since last time I played." Now the question is if NFL teams feel the same way. □